



Burwell Parish Council

New Councillor Application Pack

Thank you for considering an application to Burwell Parish Council. We hope you find the following information useful.

Like most Parish Councils, Burwell Parish Council was established in 1894. Councils are a democratically elected tier of local government, working closest to the local community

1. Overview of Burwell Parish Council

Burwell Parish Council represents the community of Burwell, working to improve local facilities, represent residents' views, and maintain the character of the village. The Parish Council consists of 17 elected volunteers who serve a 4-year term. The next Parish Council elections will be held in May 2027.

You can find out more about our assets and responsibilities [here](#)

1.1 Local Authorities

There are three tiers of local government: parish councils, district councils and county councils, as described below.

Parish Councils (Local Tier)

Parish (or town) councils are the most local tier and represent the immediate area's opinion to higher authorities. They have limited statutory duties but a range of discretionary powers, meaning their level of service provision varies.

Key responsibilities and activities:

- **Local amenities:** Managing and maintaining facilities such as village halls, parks, playgrounds, allotments, cemeteries, bus shelters, public seats, and public clocks.
- **Consultation:** They are statutory consultees on all planning applications within their area, allowing them to voice local opinions and influence decisions made by the district council.
- **Local representation:** They act as a channel for local concerns and ideas to be raised with the district and county councils, police, and health services.
- **Community initiatives:** They can provide grants to local voluntary organisations, sponsor public events, and implement small-scale crime prevention or traffic calming measures.

- **Funding:** They raise money through a precept, which is their share of the Council Tax collected by the district council.

District Councils (Middle Tier)

District councils cover a medium-sized area and are responsible for additional local services.

Key responsibilities and activities:

- **Planning:** Processing and deciding on the majority of planning applications and developing local plans.
- **Waste management:** Refuse collection and recycling.
- **Environmental health:** Food safety, health and safety, and public health matters.
- **Housing:** Housing advice, homelessness prevention, and managing housing registers.
- **Leisure and culture:** Providing leisure centres and maintaining some local parks and open spaces.
- **Revenue collection:** Billing and collecting Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (business rates) on behalf of all tiers of local government and central government.
- **Elections:** Organising local and national elections and maintaining the electoral register.

County Councils (Upper Tier)

County councils cover large geographical areas and are responsible for major, strategic services that typically require significant resources and a broad approach. Some areas have a single-tier unitary authority that provides all services at both the district and county levels.

Key responsibilities and activities:

- **Education:** Primary and secondary schools, admissions, and school transport.
- **Social services:** Adult social care and children's services, including fostering, adoption, and child protection.
- **Highways and transport:** Road maintenance (including potholes), street lighting (though can be delegated to parish councils), public transport, and road safety.
- **Waste disposal:** Managing waste disposal sites and overall waste strategy (as distinct from local waste collection by districts).
- **Libraries and heritage:** Providing library services, museums, and archive services.
- **Strategic planning:** Long-term, high-level planning for the county.
- **Public health and safety:** Consumer protection/trading standards and the fire service.

2. Getting Started

2.1 Declarations of Acceptance of Office

When you are elected or co-opted to Burwell Parish Council, you will be required to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form. By signing, you agree to observe the Council's [Code of Conduct](#), so it's important that you read it carefully before your first meeting.

2.2 Registering Financial and Other Interests

As a member of a local authority, you are required by law to complete a Register of Interests form. This must be lodged with the Monitoring Officer at East Cambridgeshire District Council, and a copy will also be held by the Parish Clerk.

The register is a public document and is published online by both the parish and district council. It may also be inspected, upon request, by any member of the public and may be referred to where there is an alleged breach of the council's code of conduct.

The Clerk will provide you with a Register of Interest form for completion and returning to them within 28 days of your election to the council.

The responsibility to keep your register up to date is yours and you will still be required to disclose that interest in meetings should circumstances arise.

2.3 Code of Conduct

Burwell Parish Council has adopted a Code of Conduct in line with the Localism Act 2011, promoting high standards of behaviour and accountability.

This code applies whenever you are acting as a councillor or the public perceive you to be acting as a councillor.

[Code of Conduct](#)

2.4 Standing Orders

Standing Orders are the Council's written rules governing its procedures, administration, and conduct of meetings.

[Standing Orders](#)

3. Council Meetings

Regular Meetings

Burwell Parish Council meets regularly as follows:

- Full Council: 2nd and last Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm – all councillors to attend
- Working Groups approximately every two months

- Annual strategy day

Meetings take place in the Mandeville Hall Meeting Room 3 unless otherwise stated.

Councillors are summoned to attend the two full Council meetings per month, usually held on the second Tuesday and the last Tuesday of the month. With Full council attendance and reading information and emails sent you should expect a minimum commitment of 3-4 hours per month.

Ideally Councillors will also sit on one or more Working Groups (Land, Builds & Facilities, Community, Safety, Health and Sport, Finance and General Purposes and Climate Change, Biodiversity and Pollution Forum). The Working Groups meet bi-monthly, usually on the third or last (following the full Council meeting) Tuesday of the month. Working groups discuss issues in more depth, generate ideas, conduct research and form proposals whereas decisions are made at full council meetings.

In addition, there is an **Annual Parish Meeting and an Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**, usually held in May. All members are expected to attend.

The Annual Parish Meeting is a legally prescribed meeting when the parish council reports to the electorate on its activities over the last year. It is also an opportunity for parishioners to question councillors on any issues relating to the village. Members of the public are permitted to speak on relevant matters during the meeting but any resolutions passed do not bind the parish council.

The purpose of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council is to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair for the Council.

Agendas and associated paperwork for all meetings are usually sent out a week prior to the meeting by email and uploaded to the website. The Clerk will provide a calendar of meetings, they can also be found on the website.

3.1 Attending your first meeting

Having completed all relevant paperwork, the first meeting you attend will be the first meeting after your election / co-option to office.

3.2 Agendas and Minutes

Statute requires a member of the council to be 'summoned' to a meeting. This formal notice will provide the date, time and place of the meeting. It will also include the agenda to give you details of all items to be discussed. It is important members take the time to read the agenda and any accompanying documents prior to the meeting to ensure they are familiar with the item.

After every meeting a set of minutes are produced. The minutes are a record of the meetings proceedings and outcomes and remain 'draft' until approved as a correct record of proceedings at the next meeting. It should be noted that the minutes are NOT a transcript of the meeting.

3.3 Public Participation in Meetings

Although the council allows for public participation items at some meetings, where members of the public can raise issues and speak on items on the agenda they are NOT public meetings, but meetings held in public.

4. Roles of Councillors and the Clerk

4.1 Role of Councillors

Members are collectively responsible for making council policy and decisions, for which they are accountable to the electorate. Members are not directly involved in the day to day provision of services to the public although members may be asked to pursue council matters on behalf of the Clerk. Members have no executive authority, and will need to deal with matters either through their collective council or in liaison with the clerk. There is no circumstance where an individual member can issue an instruction to the clerk or a contractor. A member must never act 'on behalf of the council' unless previously agreed at a council meeting. Also when speaking with individuals make it clear that you speak as a Councillor and not on behalf of the Council, unless previously agreed at a council meeting.

Councillors hold a position in public office with which comes responsibilities to attend all the meetings of the council and to abide by the seven principles (or Nolan Principles) of public life being:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

Councillors are required to promote and maintain high standards of conduct when they are representing the council and are required to:

- Treat others with respect
- Not to bully or behave in an intimidatory manner
- Not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on others
- To use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirement; and
- Not to disclose confidential information

4.2 Role of the Clerk

The Parish Clerk is the Council's Proper Officer. The Clerk is the Council's senior employee, providing professional advice and implementing Council decisions. The Clerk cannot take instructions from individual members. The clerk takes no part in the decision making of the council except to provide independent and unbiased information to support the council in its decision making.

The clerk is responsible for the staff of Burwell Parish Council. There are, in addition to the clerk, 5 members of staff: the Responsible Finance Officer, the Assistant to the Clerk, the Maintenance Officer, the Facilities Supervisor and the Assistant Facilities Supervisor.



5. Finance

Each year, the Council sets a budget and requests a precept from East Cambridgeshire District Council, collected as part of residents' council tax. We also receive monies through rent and hirings. More information on our finances can be found [here](#)

Co-option of Parish Councillors (Casual Vacancy)



1) Candidates are required to complete the application form and confirm their eligibility for the position of Parish Councillor within the statutory rules:

To qualify for co-option to a Parish Council, a person must on the day of co-option be a British Subject or citizen of the European Union or Ireland and attained the age of 18 years and

- a) on that day is and thereafter continues to be a local government elector for the area of the Authority; or
- b) has during the whole twelve months preceding that day occupied as owners or tenant any land or other premises in the area; or
- c) his or her only place of work during that twelve months has been in the area; or
- d) has during the twelve months resided in that area: or
- e) during the whole twelve months has resided in the Parish or within 4.8 kilometres (three miles) of it.

Disqualification from being elected a member is set out in Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 of which the main are:

- a) holding a paid office or employment under the Parish Council
- b) holds any employment in a company which, in accordance with Part V of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 other than section 73, is under the control of the local authority
- c) the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order
- d) having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of not less than three months, without the option of a fine during the preceding five years; or
- e) being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal electoral practices.

Copies of the eligible candidates' application form(s) will be circulated to all Parish Councillors by the Clerk (or Chair in the absence of the Clerk) at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting of the full Parish Council at which the co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated as strictly private and confidential.

2) At the Co-option Meeting

At the co-option meeting, candidates will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to the Parish Councillors (members), give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Parish Council.

The process will be carried out in the public session. A resolution may then be passed to exclude members of the public and press from the meeting to enable the Parish Council to have a private discussion regarding the suitability of the candidate/s for the vacancy. The candidate/s

and public will then be invited back to the meeting following which a vote will be taken. The vote will be recorded by voting slip.

For a candidate to be co-opted to the Parish Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting). If there are more than two candidates and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round of voting the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out of the process. Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an absolute majority. An only candidate will normally, but not necessarily, be co-opted. LGA 1972, Sch. 12 s39 states the co-option must be by an absolute majority vote of those present and voting in the meeting.

If present, a candidate who is co-opted will sign at the co-option meeting a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, including an undertaking to abide by the Parish Council's Code of Conduct, a copy of which is enclosed with this pack, and may take office immediately thereafter. If not present, a co-opted candidate will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and undertaking to abide by the Parish Council's Code of Conduct, and, upon signing, will take office either before or at the next meeting of the Parish Council. A failure to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office will result in automatic disqualification from office.

BURWELL PARISH COUNCIL

The Jubilee Reading Room, 99 The Causeway, Burwell, CB25 0DU
Tel: 01638 743142, Email: burwellpc@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk



APPLICATION TO BECOME A PARISH COUNCILLOR

Information about Burwell Parish Council can be found at www.burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk.
All applicants are advised to visit the website and read the application pack in order to gain knowledge of the Parish Council, what we do and what we are responsible for.

Title	
First Names	
Surname	
Address	
Postcode	
Email Address	
Telephone Numbers	

How long have you lived in Burwell or how do you qualify to be considered as a Parish Councillor (see page 7).

Describe briefly why you wish to become a Parish Councillor

What skills/experience do you have that you consider will assist you as a Parish Councillor?

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Are you or have you been involved in any voluntary work within Burwell or the general community? Please give details: -

Please add any further information you feel is relevant to your application to become a Parish Councillor

Signed		Date	
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Please return this application to the Parish Clerk: burwellpc@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk
or
The Jubilee Reading Room, The Causeway, Burwell, Cambridge CB25 0DU.